

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) An image forming apparatus comprising:
a plurality of image carriers arranged in a sheet transporting direction; ~~and~~
a transfer unit, which has transfer members corresponding to the respective image carriers, for transferring images carried on the respective image carriers, and
a belt suspended from the transfer member,
wherein the transfer unit has a rotary fulcrum positioned outside the belt and in the vicinity of an extension of the axis of a transfer member located on one end portion in the sheet transporting direction so as to be approximately parallel to the axis, and can be rotated on the rotary fulcrum in directions of moving to and from the image carriers, and
wherein a distance between any two of the transfer members stays constant during a rotation of the transfer unit.
2. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the transfer members are movable in directions of moving to and from the image carriers.
3. (Original) The image forming apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the transfer unit includes a supporter for supporting the transfer members, and the supporter has the rotary fulcrum.
4. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein the transfer unit is rotatable on the rotary fulcrum so that a distance between a first transfer member and an image carrier corresponding to the first transfer member comes to between 2.5 mm and 4 mm when the transfer unit is separated from the image carriers, wherein the first transfer member is adjacent to a second transfer member, the second transfer member being closer to the rotary fulcrum than the first transfer member.

5. (Currently amended) A transfer unit comprising:
a plurality of juxtaposed transfer members; ~~and~~
a supporter for supporting the transfer members so as to be rotatable and movable in a radial direction; and
a belt suspended from the transfer member,
wherein the supporter has a rotary fulcrum positioned outside the belt and in the vicinity of an extension of the axis of a transfer member located at one end portion in a direction in which the transfer members are juxtaposed, so as to be approximately parallel to the axis, and
wherein a distance between any two of the transfer members stays constant during a rotation of the transfer unit.
6. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus of claim 1, wherein the rotary fulcrum is provided separately from any shaft and transfer members.
7. (Previously Presented) The image forming apparatus of claim 3, wherein the rotary fulcrum is fixed to the supporter.
8. (Previously presented) The image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the transfer unit is rotatable between 2° and 3° on the rotary fulcrum.